

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2471

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

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USNATO BRUSSELS 545

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, PROP, CSCE, BU, UR

SUBJECT: COMMUNIST BASKET III COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

REF: STATE 038563

1. SUMMARY: IN ADDITION TO THE NOW STANDARD ARGUMENTS THAT WESTERN COMPLAINTS ABOUT COMMUNIST BASKET III PERFORMANCE REPRESENT INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS, REFLECT SUBVERSIVE INTENT, AND ARE AGAINST DETENTE AND IN VIOLATION OF THE FINAL ACT, A RECENT ARTICLE IN SOFIA COMES UP WITH SUBSTANTIAL STATISTICAL INFORMATION INTENDING TO REBUT WESTERN SPECIFIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CHARGES IN THE FIELD OF MEDIA DISSEMINATION. WHILE CLOSER ANALYSIS SHOWS MANY OF THEM TO BE ABSURD, THE COUNTER-CHARGES HAVE A SUPERFICIAL PLAUSIBILITY AND SHOULD APPEAR STRONGER WHEN THE VARIOUS RECORDS OF EE COUNTRIES ARE ADDED UP AND JUXTAPOSED TO CORRESPONDING ALLEGED GLOBAL WESTERN PERFORMANCE. MOREOVER, THE BULGARIANS HAVE NOT YET BROUGHT UP WHAT MAY BE A RATHER PERSUASIVE CASE THAT IN THE FIELD

OF DIVIDED FAMILIES THEIR RECORD COMPARES FAVORABLY WITH THAT OF THE US (96 CASES OUT OF 98, WHEREAS WE HAVE "APPROVED" ONLY 1 OUT OF 2). END SUMMARY.

2. UNUSUALLY DETAILED ARTICLE ON BASKET III IN NARODNA MLADEZH FEB 27 COVERS (A) GENERALIZED COUNTER-ATTACK AGAINST CRITICISMS OF COMMUNIST PERFORMANCE ON BASKET III AS ESSENTIALLY SUBVERSIVE IN NATURE AND AN EFFORT TO SABOTAGE DETENTE; (B) SPECIFIC CHARGES THAT BULGARIA'S PERFORMANCE IN PUBLICATION OF WESTERN BOOKS IS VASTLY BETTER THAN THAT OF WEST IN PUBLISHING BULGARIAN BOOKS; (C) SIMILAR DETAILED STATISTICS ON A BROADER BASIS DEMONSTRATING THAT "THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES" HAVE FEATURED VASTLY LARGER NUMBER OF WESTERN TV AND RADIO PROGRAMS TO THEIR PUBLIC THAN THE WEST HAS SHOWN PROGRAMS FROM THEM; (D) SOMEWHAT LESS EXCITING FIGURES ON EXPORT VS. IMPORT OF FOREIGN PERIODICALS WHICH STILL, HOWEVER, ALLEGEDLY SHOW THAT BULGARIA HAS IMPORTED VERY SUBSTANTIALLY MORE WESTERN PUBLICATIONS THAN IT HAS EXPORTED BULGARIAN PUBLICATIONS TO THOSE COUNTRIES. THE DETAILED STATISTICS NOT ONLY ON BULGARIAN BUT ALSO IN ONE CASE ON GENERAL EAST VS. WEST PERFORMANCE IN THESE SELECTED SECTORS SUGGEST THAT THE ARTICLE IS PART OF A MORE GENERALIZED COUNTER-OFFENSIVE ON THE HUMANITARIAN FRONT AND PRE-EMPTIVE ATTACK ON THE MEDIA FRONT. ARTICLE IS NOTABLE FOR ITS OMISSION OF DIVIDED FAMILIES, WHERE PROSPECTS ARE THAT BULGARIANS (SEE PARA 9) WILL TRY TO DEMONSTRATE, WITH SOME SUPERFICIAL PLAUSIBILITY, THAT THEIR RECORD IS BETTER THAN OURS.

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3. GENERAL COUNTER-CHARGE. UNDER TITLE "WHO TAKES ADVANTAGE OF THE THIRD BASKET?" SIGNED ARTICLE BY METODI PEEV NOTES REPORTS THAT WESTERN COUNTRIES INTEND TO CRITICIZE EASTERN PERFORMANCE ON THIRD BASKET CSCE. "GOING BEYOND THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT, HIDING THEIR DIVERSIONIST INTENTIONS BEHIND GENERAL SLOGANS OF 'HUMAN RIGHTS', 'LIBERALISM', 'FREEDOM OF PERSONALITY' AND 'UNRESTRICTED INTELLECTUAL EXCHANGE', THE BOURGEOIS PROPAGANDA CHAMPIONS ARE NOW UNDERTAKING A NEW ANTI-SOVIET AND ANTI-SOCIALIST CAMPAIGN DURING THE YEAR OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND BEFORE THE FORTHCOMING BELGRADE MEETING ON EUROPEAN SECURITY AND COOPERATION."

4. "A STREAM OF SLANDERS AND ITEMS OF DISINFORMATION ABOUT SOCIALIST COUNTRIES IS NOW FLOODING PAGES OF THE WESTERN PRESS AND THEIR AIRWAVES," THE ARTICLE CONTINUES. "THE AIM IS CLEAR, DESPITE EFFORTS TO DISGUISE IT: IT IS TO

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TAKE AWAY THE HOPE AND WILL OF THE MASSES FOR A STRENGTH-
ENING OF DETENTE, FOR PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP AMONG NATIONS,
AND TO GIVE A RATIONALE FOR THE RECKLESS ARMS RACE, TO
THROW MUD AT AND TO DISTORT THE POLICY OF THE SOCIALIST
COUNTRIES AND, IN CRUDE VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW
AND OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS, TO EXERCISE INFLUENCE UPON
THE POPULATION OF THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES TO CREATE A
NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THEIR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOP-
MENT AND TOWARD THE OFFICIAL POLICIES OF THEIR LAWFUL
GOVERNMENTS."

5. SPECIFIC COUNTER-CHARGE: BOOKS. DURING PERIOD 1945
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TO 1976 ARTICLE CLAIMS 2,388 TITLES BY WESTERN EUROPEAN,

US AND CANADIAN AUTHORS WERE PUBLISHED OR REPUBLISHED IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA, INCLUDING CLASSICS AND WORKS OF MODERN WRITERS, CULTURAL WORKERS AND SCHOLARS. DURING SAME PERIOD ONLY 375 BULGARIAN TITLES, AND IN INSUFFICIENT NUMBERS (USUALLY 1,200 TO 5,000 COPIES) WERE PRINTED IN THOSE COUNTRIES. ACCORDINGLY, THE RATION OF PERFORMANCE IN TERMS OF THE FINAL ACT IS 7 FOR BULGARIA VS. 1 FOR THE WEST. WITH RESPECT TO THE US, ARTICLE CLAIMS THAT THERE HAVE BEEN 488 BOOKS OF AMERICAN AUTHORS PUBLISHED IN BULGARIA WHILE IN THE US, ONLY EIGHT BOOKS BY BULGARIAN AUTHORS WERE PUBLISHED, A PROPORTION OF 61 TO 1 IN FAVOR OF BULGARIA. ALTHOUGH 477 TITLES BY BRITISH AUTHORS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED AS AGAINST 17 BOOKS BY BULGARIAN AUTHORS PUBLISHED IN ENGLAND (32 TO 1), 694 FRENCH AUTHORS AGAINST 51 BULGARIAN BOOKS PUBLISHED IN FRANCE (14 TO 1), 122 VS. 55 IN FRG, 192 VS. 47 IN ITALY, 54 VS. 20 IN AUSTRIA, 66 VS. 5 IN SPAIN, ETC. THESE STATISTICS ARE FOLLOWED BY REBUTTAL OF THE ANTICIPATED ARGUMENT THAT BULGARIAN WORKS DON'T SELL IN THE WEST, AS REPRESENTING "THE FEAR OF THE EXPANSION OF COMMUNIST IDEAS, A FEAR ABOVE ALL OF IMAGE OF SOCIALIST MAN."

6 SPECIFIC COUNTER-CHARGE: TV AND RADIO PROGRAMS. AGAIN CITING RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE FINAL ACT ABOUT THE SIGNATORIES FACILITATING COOPERATION IN THOSE FIELDS, ARTICLE CLAIMS THAT "DURING ONE YEAR THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA RECEIVED OVER 3,000 HOURS OF TV PROGRAMS FROM WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, WHICH WAS THREE TIMES MORE PROGRAMS THAN THOSE COUNTRIES TOOK FROM US. IN TV PROGRAMS OF THE WESTERN COUNTRIES THE SOCIALIST STATES PARTICIPATE ONLY WITH 2 PERCENT. IN FIELD OF INFORMATIONAL-PUBLICITY TYPE OF MATERIALS THE SOCIALIST RADIO AND TV ORGANIZATIONS USE THREE TO FIVE TIMES MORE ORIGINAL WESTERN MATERIALS" (THAN ARE USED IN THE OTHER DIRECTION). "IN 1975 THE COMMITTEE FOR TV AND RADIO AT THE COMMITTEE FOR ART AND CULTURED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TURE BOUGHT AND TELECAST 49 TV AND FEATURE FILMS AND 514 FILM PROGRAMS AND MATERIALS FROM THE CAPITALIST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, THE US AND CANADA. DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS 56 PLAYS OF WESTERN CLASSICS AND BY CONTEMPORARY WESTERN AUTHORS HAVE BEEN TELECAST THROUGH THE TV THEATRE PROGRAM. FROM 1971 TO 1976 BULGARIA HAS TRANSLATED AND PERFORMED 35 DRAMATIC WORKS BY AMERICAN AUTHORS (WHEREAS) NO BULGARIAN DRAMATIC WORKS HAVE BEEN TRANSLATED AND PERFORMED AT ALL IN THE US."

7. SPECIFIC COUNTER-CHARGE: PUBLICATIONS. "THE PRB SPENDS ANNUALLY OVER 1,300,000 LEVA FOR IMPORTING PERIODICALS FROM THE WESTERN COUNTRIES. THUS, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR

IMPORTING MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS FROM THE US, FOREIGN CURRENCY IN THE VALUE OF 150,000 LEVA WAS SPENT; AS COMPARED TO CURRENCY IN VALUE OF ONLY 4,000 LEVA (BEING EARNED FROM) EXPORTED BULGARIAN PERIODICALS." RATIO FOR FRANCE IS SHOWN AS 290,000 VS. 500; FOR THE FRG 260,000 VS. 35,000; FOR ENGLAND 130,000 VS. 2,500 ETC CONCLUSION: "THOSE FACTS INDICATE THAT NOT SOCIALIST BULGARIA BUT THE KINGS OF THE INFORMATION-PROPAGANDA CENTERS IN THE WEST ACT IN CONTRADICTION TO THE HELSINKI UNDERTAKINGS."

8. COMMENT: NOTABLE IN THESE COUNTER-CHARGES ARE (A) THE IMPUTATION OF COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY PURPOSES TO THE WEST WHEN IT LOOKS TOWARD A LOOSENING-UP IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION; WHEREAS WHEN THE WEST DOES NOT OPEN ITSELF UP MORE LIBERALLY TO COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA, CITING THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM OF ITS MEDIA, THIS SHOWS "FEAR OF THE EXPANSION OF COMMUNIST IDEAS"; (B) A SUPERFICIALLY STRONG POSITION OF BULGARIA AND

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MUTATIS MUTANDIS THE OTHER EE COUNTRIES, IN THAT THEY DO ACCEPT AND PERFORM AND CIRCULATE WESTERN PROGRAMS, PLAYS AND BOOKS ON A FAIRLY SUBSTANTIAL SCALE ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY FEATURE UNATTRACTIVE ASPECTS OF THE WEST, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE RECENTLY SEEN MORE TV PROGRAMS WHICH DO GIVE WESTERN COUNTRIES AN OPPORTUNITY ALSO TO SHOW ATTRACTIVE ASPECTS OF THEIR LIFE; (C) THE RATHER RIDICULOUS STATISTICS ON PUBLICATIONS, DERIVED LARGELY FROM IMPORTATION OF COMMUNIST NEWSPAPERS FROM THE WEST PLUS THOSE NON-COMMUNIST PUBLICATIONS WHICH ARE RESERVED TO THE GOVERNMENT AND NOT AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC. STILL, IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO UNDERESTIMATE THIS PREEMPTIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BARRAGE, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE COMMUNISTS POINT TO OBLIGATIONS OF GOVERNMENTS TO ENCOURAGE, FACILITATE ETC. ACTIVITIES IN THEIR PRIVATE SECTOR, TENDING TO SHOW THEY EXPECT TO BRUSH ASIDE THE ARGUMENT THAT IT IS UP TO FREE ENTERPRISE AND MARKET CONDITIONS TO DETERMINE HOW MUCH INFORMATION AND ART FROM THE EAST IS TO BE DISSEMINATED IN THE WEST.

9. IT WOULD IN OUR OPINION ALSO BE A MISTAKE TO DISMISS THE BULGARIAN STATISTICAL ARGUMENTS ON THE GROUND THAT THEY REPRESENT THE "MOUSE VS. ELEPHANT" FALLACY, THAT THE US COULD NOT EXPECT TO PAY AS MUCH ATTENTION TO BULGARIAN LITERATURE AS THE BULGARIANS PAY TO AMERICAN LITERATURE WHICH IS SO MUCH LARGER AND MORE IMPORTANT; FOR AT BELGRADE WE MAY FIND OURSELVES CONFRONTED WITH CONSOLIDATED STATISTICS OF THE ENTIRE EASTERN BLOC INCLUDING THE SOVIET UNION. WE WILL OF COURSE SAY THAT ANYONE WISHING TO READ EE COMMUNIST PUBLICATIONS IS FREE TO IMPORT THEM AND THAT THE BULGARIANS (AND OTHER EE COUNTRIES) ARE EXERCISING CENSORSHIP IN SELECTING WHAT THEY WILL LET IN, WHEREAS WE DO NOT DO SO; AND PRESUMABLY WE WILL SAY THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO OFFER BETTER FACILITIES FOR THE BULGARIANS (AND OTHER EE COUNTRIES) TO SELL THEIR WARES IN OUR COUNTRY AND WILL ASK FOR RECIPROCITY. BUT WE STILL MAY HAVE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT WE HAVE DONE SOMETHING TO LIVE UP TO THE HELSINKI PROVISIONS THAT GOVERNMENTS RPT GOVERNMENTS WILL ENCOURAGE, FACILITATE, PROMOTE, ETC.

10. MOREOVER, THE BULGARIANS HAVE NOT YET SHOT THEIR BOLT. PRESUMABLY THEY WILL HAVE SOMETHING SEPARATE TO SAY ON TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS. WHEN IT COMES TO COMPARING THEIR OWN PERFORMANCE WITH THAT OF THE WEST IN THE FIELD OF DIVIDED FAMILIES, IT IS EVIDENT THAT THEY ARE CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN A MASSIVE EFFORT TO PULL UP THEIR SOCKS SO AS TO APPEAR IN A BETTER LIGHT AT BELGRADE. WE HAVE INFORMATION OF CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS IN SETTTLING SUCH CASES WITH OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES, AND AS REPORTED WITH RESPECT TO THE US THE BULGARI-

ANS ARE PREPARING A CASE TENDING TO SHOW THAT IN 96 OUT
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OF 98 CASES THEY HAVE EITHER PROVIDED EXIT DOCUMENTS OR
ARE NOT PREVENTING DEPARTURE (ALTHOUGH REFUSING TO "ENCOURAGE" IT); WHEREAS THEY MAY WELL CHARGE THAT THE US
HAS "SETTLED" ONLY HALF OF ITS CASES, NAMELY ONE (JELYAZKOV) OUT OF TWO (THE OTHER ONE BEING THE KHRISTOV CASE,
WHICH HAS BEEN SUBJECT OF NUMEROUS SEPARATE COMMUNICATIONS). ALTHOUGH THE US CASES AREN'T STRICTLY COMPARABLE,
AND THE BULGARIAN PERFORMANCE IS NOT CONCLUSIVELY AS POSITIVE AS THEY CLAIM, SUPERFICIALLY THEY MAY HAVE
A BETTER CASE ON DIVIDED FAMILIES THAN WE WOULD HAVE THOUGHT ONLY A MONTH AGO.
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770073-0664
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From: SOFIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770396/aaaadhcw.tel
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION EUR
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Page Count: 7
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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Reference: 77 STATE 38563
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
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SAS ID: 3218269
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
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TAGS: PFOR, PROP, BU, UR, YO, CSCE
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vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a00738be-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
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Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009